Hike in power tariff in Delhi

2480. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the factors responsible for periodic hike in power tariff in the National Capital of Delhi; and

(b) whether the infrastructure has been improved after privatization of power distribution in Delhi and other major cities?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED):(a) Determination of tariff for retail sale of electricity is the statutory function of the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC) under the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003. The SERC is required to determine the tariff in accordance with the provisions of the Act and after taking into consideration the annual revenue requirement of the licensee and considering the suggestions and objections received from the public, in a transparent manner. The tariff for retail sale of electricity mainly depends on the cost of power purchase/generation, Operation and Maintenance expenses of the licensee and technical and commercial losses in the system.

(b) Distribution in recent times has been privatized in Orissa and Delhi. The Government of NCT of Delhi has informed that there has been significant addition to the infrastructure such as power transformers, extra high voltage cables, installation of distribution transformers, 11 Kv feeders etc. by the distribution companies and improvement in the quality of power supply.

In Orissa also, it has been reported that there has been general improvement in load shedding, interruptions/tripping frequency and restoration of faults by the distribution companies.

Faulty meters in Delhi

2481. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry received complaints of faulty meters from different parts of the country especially from Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that the digital meters are found to be faulty and unreliable;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the meters installed by private distribution companies are found to be faster and faulty; and

(d) whether the Ministry is taking steps to reassure the people that they will not be left at the mercy of profit making private companies?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): (a) Distribution of electricity falls in the domain of the State Governments and the distribution licensees are regulated by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC). Complaints have been made in few States by some consumers about faulty meters.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Information received from various Utilities/State Governments /SERCs in this regard is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(d) The rate of return to the Distribution companies is regulated by the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions through the regulation of tariff.

Under the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, it is mandatory for the licensee to establish Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum in accordance with the Regulations framed by the Regulatory Commission. Appeals against the orders of this forum can be made to an authority known as Ombudsman who is appointed by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

To enable the regular monitoring of redressal of grievances of consumers, the electricity Rules 2005 notified by the Central Government prescribes that the Ombudsman shall prepare a report on a six monthly basis giving details of the nature of the grievances of the consumer dealt by the Ombudsman, the response of the Licensees in the redressal of the grievances and the opinion of the Ombudsman on the Licensee's compliance of the standards of performance as specified by the Commission under section 57 of the Act during the preceding six months. This report under sub-clause (a) above shall be forwarded to the State Commission and the State Government within 45 days after the end of the relevant period of six moths.

Statement

Information regarding faulty digital meters

Orissa Electricity Regulatory Commission

A specific case has been registered by the consumers against CESCO in case No. 7/2003 dated 11.9.2003 and the Commission after thorough scrutiny and hearing both the parties directed as under:—

"In the persent scenario aggressive metering is highly required to check the rising trend of distribution losses. So, any effort by any Distribution Licensee for a mega-metering project is most welcome. There is no doubt that CESCO's effort to replace the existing defective meters with better quality meter is appreciable. The Commission was also given to understand by CESCO that around 80,000 meters have been installed so far in various areas under CESCO and not a single complaint from a genuine consumer has been received relating to the newly installed meter. The report of the Chief Elelctrical Inspector revealed that all these meters confirm to the permissible limits as stipulated in IS-13010-1990. The special features of the electromechanical meter are polycarbonate case and magnetic suspension bearing with high level of accuracy under various conditions of load. The transparent case makes it easy for detection of any tampering.

In the above circumstances, the Commission considers that the general apprehension of the consumers/general public about the accurate reading of these Chinese meters is untenable. However, in case of any individual compliant, the respondent licensee should act promptly to do the needful."

Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission

There is a general feeling amongst the consumers that the digital meters are faster and unreliable. The Board, on the other hand, feels that the digital meters are accurate and not so easily tampered whereas mechanical meters tend to get slower with the passage of time and are easily tampered and as such the digital meters are resisted by the consumers. However, no detailed and reliable studies have been conducted by the Board in this regard and as such it is not possible to say that the digital meters are actually faulty or unreliable.

Jharkhand State Electricity Regulatory Commission

The Commission has not received any complaints regarding faulty and unreliability of the digital meters till date.

Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission

No such complaint regarding the digital meters being found to be faulty and unreliable has been received in the Commission.

Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission

No specific complaints have been received on new meters installed in consumer premises.

Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission

Report of the joint inspection by Government Electrical Inspector, Consumer representatives and Licensee do not reveal that the digital meters are unreliable.

Himachal Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission

The percentage of faulty meters reported by Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board (HPSEB) is about 2%. As such it cannot be construed that electronic energy meters are faulty and unreliable.

Government of NCT of Delhi

In view of complaints being received form the various quarters, the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) had set up a committee in August 2003 to look into various complaints being received in the Commission regarding faulty meters. The Committee also had officials from a prominent NGO namely Common Cause. The Committee undertook testing of almost 375 meters randomly selected from the stores of Distribution Companies at the test bench set up in the Commission. The Committee had observed that 91% of meters recorded consumption limits within prescribed levels given in the Indian Electricity Rules; 2% of meters were found to be slow and 0.5% were found faster than the prescribed limit. About 5% of meters, however, were found to be defective seemingly due to design features. Subsequently, Distribution Companies had carried out a meter testing drive from 16.7.2004 to 18.8.2004 and found only about 0.7% meters to be faster than the specified limits.